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4. (Amended) Method according to claim 1, characterized in that reduction is carried out to a depth of about 4 to 5 μm .

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5. (Amended) Method according to claim 1, characterized in that reduction is carried out to generate 0.1% to 5% by weight of cysteine with respect to the total amino acids of the keratinous hair fibres.

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7. (Amended) Method according to claim 1, characterized in that the disulphide bonds of the keratin are reduced using a reducing agent selected from thiols, hydrides, sulphites or bisulphites, phosphines and phosphites, hyperbranched polymers and dendrimers carrying terminal thiol functions.

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10. (Amended) Method according to claim 10, characterized in that the phosphine is selected from tris (2-carboxyethyl) phosphine and tris (hydroxymethyl) phosphine.

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11. (Amended) Method according to claim 10, characterized in that the phosphine is present in a concentration in the range 10^{-3} M to 1 M.

12. (Amended) Method according to claim 1, characterized in that the pH of the reducing agent composition is in the range 3 to 9, preferably in the range 4 to 7.

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13. (Amended) Method according to claim 1, characterized in that the contact

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time for the aqueous reducing agent solution with the keratinous fibres is in the range from about 30 seconds to 1 hour, the temperature being in the range from room temperature to a temperature of less than 60°C.

14. (Amended) Method according to claim 1, characterized in that the active compound is selected from colorants, sunscreens, shine agents and hydrophobic compounds, said active compound carrying at least one nucleofugic function.

15. (Amended) Method according to claim 1, characterized in that the active compound is used in an aqueous solution at a concentration in the range from about 10⁻³% to 20%, the pH of said solution being in the range from about 2 to 10.

16. (Amended) Method according to claim 1, characterized in that the contact time for the aqueous solution of active compound is generally in the range from about 1 minute to 1 hour, the temperature being in the range from room temperature to a temperature of less than 60°C.

REMARKS

Entry and consideration are requested.

The claims have been amended to reduce multiple dependencies.

The Examiner is requested to consider the documents listed in the attached International Search report, copies of which should have been forwarded by the International Bureau, and return a copy of the attached Form PTO 1449 which lists these documents, pursuant to MPEP §609, as an acknowledgment that the documents

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